

How to Age in Place

*Helpful Tips to
Remain Independent
in Your Home*

WRITTEN BY
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Dr. Lianne Rogers PT, DPT specializes in helping adults 60+ move with confidence and stay physically active through all stages of life. She is passionate about educating patients in the areas of fall awareness and prevention. She enjoys assisting people to adopt a healthy and active lifestyle to remain independent throughout their lives.

Lianne is the Education Committee Chair for the Arizona Fall Prevention Coalition and a certified Tai Chi for Arthritis and Fall Prevention Instructor.

INTRODUCTION

You might ask yourself what is aging in place and why is it important to me? Aging in places refers to older adults who want to remain in the home of their choice as long as they are capable. To do this successfully requires preparation and planning. As we age there are many changes that occur to your body that you need to be aware of to assist in your planning to remain in your home.

Aging in place may be important to you and/or your spouse as you chose to live in your home through the remainder of your life. Many older adults who wish to remain in their home begin to notice that every day tasks can become difficult, therefore leading to a decreased quality of life or disuse of a certain section of their home due to accessibility.

In this guide we will provide tips and suggestions for home modifications to make your home safer and easily assessable to keep you independent and mobile in your home.

ENTRANCE

Getting in and out of your home may be tricky if you have a step or multiple steps to maneuver. If you feel the entrance to your home is unsafe or difficult to negotiate than follow these tips to assist you.

- ◆ Add a railing, handles, or grab bar next to your steps
- ◆ Solid rubber threshold ramps can make an easy transition crossing into an entry/exit way with walkers, cane, or wheelchairs

Keep your feet on the ground and your thoughts at lofty heights.
~Peace Pilgrim

LIGHTING

Lighting helps us to see where we are going and what potential obstacles could be in our path. As we get older our vision deteriorates and can impact our balance. Be sure to keep your rooms and hallways well lit to avoid tripping and falling. Here are options to improve lighting in your home.

- ◆ Install motion sensor lighting in rooms and hallways
- ◆ Install lighted light switches
- ◆ Use night lights throughout your home
- ◆ Have a lamp at your bedside
- ◆ Open curtains, shades, and/or blinds to allow natural light into a room
- ◆ Add brighter bulbs to existing light sources
- ◆ Install clapper sound activated lights

BATHROOM

Bathrooms can be the most dangerous room in a home for an older adult to experience a fall. We use it multiple times throughout the day and some frequent it in the wee hours of the night. Here are a few modifications to make it a safer room.

- ◆ Install grab bars in the shower and next to toilet
- ◆ Use an elevated toilet seat (with or without handles)
- ◆ Motion activated LED toilet lights
- ◆ Use a bathroom chair or bench in the shower
- ◆ Use shower wands or extension handles
- ◆ Non-slip surface treatment for floors, steps, showers and tub.

STAIRS & STEPS

Stairs or a step in a home may be frightening to some older adults if they do not have something to hold on to. Follow these quick improvements to keep you safe.

- ◆ Add non-slip treads on stairs or steps
- ◆ Install railings or handles to stairs.

FLOORING

Throw rugs throughout your home can be a potential for a fall hazard that can cause you to slip or trip. It would be my recommendation to have rugs in your home removed. If you are unwilling to part with your rug purchase non-slip mats to place under the rug.

WALKWAYS

Having too many obstacles in your home can be potential hazards for a fall. It is crucial to maintain clear walking paths to the kitchen, bathroom, and bedroom.

- ◆ Tie up loose extension cords. Extension cords should stay close to the walls and not cross over walking paths in your home.
- ◆ Outside of the home can pose potential fall hazards. Uneven pavement or a slight change in surface on a sidewalk or walkway can cause you to trip and fall. Spray paint it with a bright color or use bright colored duck tape to warn yourself and others of a change in height.

Note these are suggestions only to help make your home safer. They may not prevent accidents from occurring in the home due to the multi-factorial realities of home-based accidents.

We hope you found the information in this guide useful. If you're still concerned about your safety and independence with living in your home, we'd be happy to come out and assist you.

Call us today for your FREE phone consultation

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